

Food waste problem in hong kong essay sample

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Introduction

Renowned as the Food Paradise, people all over the world come to Hong Kong for the food here. This definitely creates lots of economics benefits for Hong Kong. Nevertheless, this makes the problem of food waste ever more serious. As mentioned by the Environmental Protection Department, “ In recent years, the amount of food waste arising from the C&I sectors has increased steadily: from less than 400 tonnes per day in 2002 to over 800 tonnes per day in 2012. (Environmental Protection Department)” The Green Power also indicates “ Among the annual 3, 500 tonnes of food waste in Hong Kong, 70% is domestic food waste and the remaining 30% is industrial waste. In fact, the volume of municipal solid waste has declined slightly, by 0. 3% from 2008 to 2011. Yet, the volume of food waste has increased by 20%. (Green Power, 2013). Not only does Hong Kong face the problem, but also countries all over the world. It is of paramount importance for our government to put more effort on solving the problem. Therefore, in this essay, I will be first discussing the drawbacks brought by generating too much leftover and end by suggesting some feasible solutions on different education work, the food recycling scheme as well as the waste disposal charge scheme.

Drawbacks brought by food waste

Generating too much food is definitely harmful for our city as there are many disadvantages brought by the problem of food waste. We shall never lose sight of the disadvantages brought by generating too much food waste. Now, I will be discussing one of the drawbacks brought by food waste.

We must all admit that the landfill in Hong Kong is going to be full. “

At present, Hong Kong relies solely on landfills for MSW disposal. Despite the concerted efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle, approximately 9000 tonnes of MSW are still discarded in the landfills every day ”(HKEPD, 2010). “ It is expected that the current three strategic landfills in Hong Kong, namely South East New Territories (SENT), North East New Territories (NENT), and West New Territories (WENT), will reach their maximum capacities in 2015, 2017, and 2019, respectively ”(Kok Sin Woon, 2013).

The increasing number of food waste put a heavy burden on Hong Kong’s limited landfills. More than that, it is harming the environment. “ The current practice of disposing of biodegradable food waste at landfills is not sustainable and is environmentally undesirable as it depletes the limited landfill space, creates odour nuisance, generates leachate and landfill gases that require further mitigation measures to deal with, and squanders the useful organic contents. (Environmental Protection Department)” With more and more food waste in Hong Kong, the landfills are going to be full in the coming few years and this will also damage the environment. Therefore, we should think about some solutions to overcome the problem.

Solutions

Response to the food waste problem, the other members from the society can put efforts in improving the situation while the government can be the biggest facilitator. In the following part, the possible solution will be in three aspects and they are the education work, the food-recycling scheme and the waste disposal charge scheme.

Education and publication are always the best ways to solve problems. We can tackle the problem by fostering citizens the importance of treasuring food. As parents of children, they have huge influence on the behaviour of their children. " Most previous studies have shown a modest correlation between the parents' levels of activity and the child's activity. We found evidence of a somewhat larger influence of parents, the effect of their activity levels being particularly striking in families in which both parents were active." (MPH Lynn L. Moore, 1990) Therefore, parents can be a good model of their children in order to encourage their children to finish the whole set of meal everyday so that their children can establish a good habit of not wasting food. In long term, the behaviour of wasting food can be reduced as parents make an effort on establishing the moral value in their children's mind.

Apart from parents, the school can also improve the situation by providing some first-hand experiences for students to learn. I believe that the hunger meal will be a very good way of experience for students. Actually, hunger meal is an activity first done by the Oxfam Hong Kong. They organize this kind of activity because they want to provide " a way to feel, through one's own stomach, the huge gap between poor, hungry people and rich, well-fed people."(Oxfam Hong Kong) " Student and teachers can set their own fundraising targets. Donations will be used in Oxfam Hong Kong's projects around the world.

Oxfam can also arrange representatives to give a talk on " Hunger and Poverty" during your school's Oxfam Hunger Lunch event, to help students learn more about hunger and poverty." (Oxfam Hong Kong) Therefore,
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schools can try to cooperate with the Oxfam Hong Kong , some similar activities or organize talks on the topic of food waste and food recycling to promote the importance of treasuring food in school. More than that, school can also raise students' awareness by competitions. School can hold competitions like video making, menu designing or cooking competition for students on the topic of treasuring food. Students can definitely learn to reduce food waste by participating in the activities.

In addition, publication is another education work that makes a big difference in people's life. " He supports his side by explaining the media business and the corporate giants who control every second of airplay and the idea that advertising which is displayed by the corporate giants are not to inform society but to persuade them to think a certain way and do a certain thing," (Lyons, 2011) So , the government can put more effort promoting the idea of reducing waste at source through TV advertisements , posters or banners. For example, the government can post the existing " Don't be a Big Waster: poster in more estates of Hong Kong. More than that, they might make some TV advertisement telling people to prepare suitable quantity of food in every meal or to prepare a shopping list when they are buying food. This can definitely remind people to treasure food and to reduce food at source. Other than the government, the business sector can also help the situation. For example, more restaurants can join the " Less Rice for \$1 Less" campaign, which is a campaign organized by Greeners Action, that allows customers \$1 dollars discount when they order their meal with less rice. This can provide economic incentives for people to reduce food waste and persuade them to treasure food.

Putting more effort in educating citizens the importance of treasuring food is definitely a feasible solution to relieve the food waste problem. On the other hand, the food recycling scheme is also a possible solution.

The food waste can be recycled in two ways. The first way is to use the leftover from hotels and restaurants to donate food for the needy. Actually, “there are currently 25 non-profit organizations in Hong Kong promoting food recycling” (Green Power , 2013) “Based on the food recycling organizations and locations, it is estimated that 200kg of food can be collected daily per organization. In other words, 5 tonnes of food can be collected daily, which amounts to 0.14% of total food waste.” (Green Power , 2013) The organizations believe that “Much of the discarded edible food can benefit those who are living in poverty and facing hunger everyday.” (Food For Good) If the government can offer more financial help to the organization or the government tries to implement a food donation scheme, more and more edible food can be used for helping the needy and this can definitely help in reducing food waste as well.

The second way is that “food waste can be recycled as compost products and fodder.” (Green Power, 2013) Take Taipei as an example, “Food waste is further classified as “raw food waste” and “cooked food waste”. “Raw food waste” refers to waste like uncooked vegetables and fruit skins that can be used as compost products; while “Cooked Food Waste” refers to cooked food such as leftovers that can be used as fodder.” (Green Power , 2013) If the government follow the footsteps of Taipei and try to develop a food waste recycling system, the amount of food waste adding pressure to the landfills will be reduced.

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The example of the Group's K11 Art Mall has proved that the food-recycling scheme is feasible and effective. " The Group's K11 Art Mall has launched the K11 Multicultural Living District – Food Waste Recycling Scheme, encouraging tenants of the mall as well as nearby restaurants to implement source separation of food waste under which K11 centralizes the collection of food waste and sends to food waste recyclers for processing into animal feedstock. After the three-month trial period, food waste from participating restaurants showed a 15% reduction." (New World Development Company Limited) Therefore, the government should make the food-recycling scheme mandatory in order to ameliorate the food waste problem.

Another feasible solution is that the government can help to solve the problem by implementing the waste disposal charge scheme. " The Waste Disposal Charge System levies the charges needed for handling those wastes on manufacturers and importers of the goods/ materials/containers which are difficult to recycle and are susceptible to harmful substances and issues in the process of waste management so as to curb the generation of further wastes and prevent wasted resources." (Korean Environment Corporation) By charging citizens and companies for producing too much waste can act as an economic incentives to them to reduce food waste.

" Based on the experiences of South Korea and Taipei, once a quantity-based charging system is imposed on waste, food waste can be further reduced by one-third to half. The effect is obvious." (Green Power , 2013) We can see that the waste disposal charge scheme can effectively help to reduce the amount of food waste. More than that, " A combined disposal tax and reuse subsidy can provide signals for an efficient level of wastes disposal and has <https://assignbuster.com/food-waste-problem-in-hong-kong-essay-sample/>

advantages over unit-based pricing in some situations.” (Dinan, 2002)

Therefore, the government can also provide subsidies for those who recycle food. This can encourage citizens and companies to recycle food and produce less waste and to cultivate citizens’ habits of reducing waste.

The above three solutions cannot reach their ultimate effectiveness without the cooperative efforts by the whole society. As a result, the government, as the leader of our city, should be the biggest facilitator to encourage the city to reduce food waste by providing help financially and implementing policies.

Conclusion

The problem of food waste is becoming more and more serious in Hong Kong which is putting a huge burden on the capacity of the landfills in Hong Kong. By the joining efforts of the members from our society, the problem can definitely be relieved. Parents, schools and the government can make more efforts on education work. The government can give a helping hand to the organizations that work on food- recycling and develop a comprehensive waste disposal charge scheme. Lastly, it is of paramount importance that people in the city bear in mind that the most powerful and effective way to ameliorate the problem is to reduce waste as source which means people think before they eat and save food.

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